NARRATIVE

OF

The late dreadful fire which happened at *Bridge-Town* in the *Barbadoes*, *April* 18. 1668.

As the same was communicated in two Letters from Mr. *John Bushel*, and Mr. *Francis Bond*, two Eminent Merchants there, to Mr. *Edward Bushel* Citizen and Merchant of *London*.

Containing the beginning, progress, and event of that dreadful fire; with the estimation of the loss accrewing thereby, as it was delivered to his Majesty by several Eminent Merchants concerned in that Loss.

Licenced According to Order.

LONDON.
Printed by *Peter Lillicrap*, Living in *Clerken-well Close*.

An abstract of a Leter from Mr. *John Bushel*, and Mr. *Francis Bond* two Eminent Merchants in the *Barbadoss*, to Mr *Edward Bushel* Citizen and Merchant of *London*; concerning the late dreadful Fire, which hapned at *Bridge Town*, the cheif place in that Island *April* 18th 1668.

SIR.

THis Vessels sudden departure, and our amazeing distraction gives us time to write to you, onely 2 or three lines, but upon the most dismal and afflicting occasion that ever offered it self from these parts; for on Satterday evening last, being the eighteenth of this instant month, there hapned a most dreadful Fire in our Town, which in the space of two or three houres time, burnt and consumed almost all the whole buildings there-

of, ſave only a very few houſes to the great aſtoniſhment of all thoſe who were either concerned in the loſs, or ſpectators thereof.

Divine Providence ſo ordered it, that our houſe was one of the firſt ſacrifices to the flames, whether it begun in our or our Neighbors houſe we know not; and help could none be there expected, it being next door to the publique Magazine of the Iſland, which ſomtime after blew up, with great terrour and damage; we having ſcare time in the mean ſpace to ſave our Books and Papers of concern (together with our lives) from the mercileſs rage of that devouring fire, and dreadful ſtroke of the powder which killed many with its violent ſtroke.

The Lord ſanctifie this affliction unto us, and cauſe us with deep and ſerious contrition, to be ſenſible of his ſevere diſpleaſure, which hath been revealed againſt us, and others of this Nation.

Yours SIR.

Barbadoes April
the 20th 1668.

THE

The abstract of another Letter sent from the aforesaid Persons to Mr: *Edward Bushel* dated April the 27th 1668.

SIR,

WE shall now (as having more time and leasure) give you a particular account of the sad callamity which befel on Satrurday the 18 instant, mentioned in my last: that day we were at home busy, writing most part of the day, and at Evening about five of the clock, (our house being washed and books and papers laid aside, being our usual practise in order to a timely retirement for the Sabboth; we two walked out as far as *Exchange-place*, leaving three or four of our servants at home, but we had not been gone little above the space of a quarter of an hour, till we were allarum'd with an out cry of a fire, which was said to be either in our, or our Neighbours Garret. *James Coslin* was then in our counting house receiving of mony, yet so ignorant of the mishap that he knew nothing thereof, till he was made sensible of it, by the peoples running up stairs, who discovered the garret all on fire: nor can he give any account by what means or when it hapned, that which is much suspected and most probable, is that it was either done by a little *Negro*, who lighted the Candle for them to tell the Money, and might go up with the same into the Garret, or else that it might be

be kindled by some spark accidentally falling from some of the Neighbours Chimneys, but of which we cannot yet absolutely determine,

But we upon our return, finding the Fire past recovery, hasted to secure what was most considerable, and what in such a sudden exigency we could carry away, not daring to stay any long time, the Fire prevailing so dreadfully upon our House, and it being next to the Magazine of the Island, which had in it about 170 barrels of powder, which set such an amazement, and struck such a terrour upon the hearts of most people, that they durst not attempt to give that assistance, which otherwise would have been done and performed, and might have prevented (in all probability) a great part of this devastation.

So that by what hath been demonstrated, we must ascribe the cause of the Fire prevailing so far, to be the cause of the Magazine, which being in the middle of the Town, was a terrour to every man for lending his assistance to the quenching of the flames, well knowing that when the Fire came to the powder so near adjacent, it would cause such a blow as would destroy all near unto it: and indeed it is a miracle of mercy (that upon so little warning) it did not destroy many hundreds of people, which either by covetuosness of saving their goods, or impotency, staid behind, as it was likely to have done, had the powder been in a low room, and not above, and questionless had it met with any opposition it might have caused a very great Earthquake (which Islands of this Nature are much subject unto) and so by consequence, reason induces me to believe, that very few in or near the Town had escaped alive. But God whose

whose mercies are infinite here demonstrated it unto us, and mingled pitty with his Judgements, in not punishing to the full measure of our deserts.

This blow so dispersed the Fire, and shattered all the houses, that the whole Town became presently a prey to its flames, it being supposed there is no less then 800 houses consumed in this terrible conflagration, with a very great value of goods, the Town being very rich in Commodities, of which very little was saved, most off those goods being too cumberous as to admit of a sudden removeal.

Sir this is a short but true account from your faithful Friends.

Barabdoes April 27. 1668.

J. B. F. B.

This *Bridge* Town was the chiefest place in all the *Barbadoes*, both for richness in Commodities, and numerousness in Inhabitants; there were above Twenty able Merchants living in the same, who drave a great Trade in Tobacco, Sugar, Ginger, Indigo, *&c.* The losses that accrewed by this great and sudden conflagration, amounted to above four Hundred thousand pound, as hath been since estimated, and and by some able knowing Merchants delivered in unto his Majesty.

This

This Country of *Barbadoes* lies on the *North East* of *St. Vincent*, in the Latitude of 13 degrees and 20 minutes, it is of an Oval form, 17 or 18 miles in compass. The soil in shew is like that of *England*, but far more fruitful; on the *East* side thrusting out it self with points and angles, which yeild some Bays, but full of Quicksands, and unsafe for shipping; on the *South* furnished with a large and commodious Harbor; not very well provided of for Fruits or Cattel till made a Collony of the *English*, who have brought thither from their own Country, Swine and Kine, *Oranges* and the like from others, The cheif Commodities thereof, are (as we have said) Tobacco, Sugar, Ginger, Indigo, *&c.* Of which they furnish other Countries yearly in great abundance.

This Plantation is said to be worth all the rest which are made by the *English*, who are the sole Collony in the *Island*, and have prospered very much, until this unhappy accident before recited.

FINIS.

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